

VU Research Portal

Supportive relationships and loneliness: Suggestions for the improvement of support networks as guidelines for research and policy

van Tilburg, T.G.

published in

Support networks in a caring community

1985

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

citation for published version (APA)

van Tilburg, T. G. (1985). Supportive relationships and loneliness: Suggestions for the improvement of support networks as guidelines for research and policy. In J. A. Yoder, J. M. L. Jonker, & R. A. B. Leaper (Eds.), *Support networks in a caring community* (pp. 215-225). Nijhoff.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

E-mail address:

vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl

SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND LONELINESS: SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT
OF SUPPORT NETWORKS AS GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY

THEO VAN TILBURG

Previous research has documented particular situations where primary relationship networks fail to provide the support required. Both the quantity and the quality of relationships are important for individual well-being. More specifically, the network of relationships should enclose at least one person who can be considered a confidant, with whom daily experiences can be shared, and who can provide help in the event of problems.

The absence of a confidant, such as a spouse or a friend, has been shown to increase the likelihood of (mental and physical) health problems and to influence well-being negatively (Berkman and Syme, 1979; Gove, 1972; House, Robbins and Metzner, 1982; De Jong-Gierveld, 1984a; Knipscheer, 1980; Kobrin and Hendershot, 1977; Lowenthal and Haven, 1968; Ormel, 1980; Reiche, 1982; Weeda, 1982; Van de Willige and Ormel, 1979; Woldringh and Knapen, 1980). In addition to an examination of the contribution of the composition of the network to well-being, it is important to consider the role of the support provided by social relationships. Relationships are defined as "supportive" if they are characterized by the individual as relationships that provide intimacy, caring and reflection (emotional support). Furthermore, supportive relationships are relationships that provide the individual with practical help (instrumental support) and with information about problem solving (informational support) (1). Supportive relationships in particular have been shown to contribute to the individual's abilities to cope with problems, and to contribute to general health and well-being (Blazer, 1982; Cassel, 1976; Gore, 1978; House, 1981; Lin, Ensel, Simeone and Kuo, 1979; Turner, 1981; A.W. Williams, Ware and Donald, 1981; Winnubst, Marcelissen and Kleber, 1982).

We shall illustrate these observations with results from Dutch loneliness research (De Jong-Gierveld, 1984b) (2). In this project, respondents were asked to mention their most important relationship. Respondents rated the degree of support provided by a particular relationship on the basis of a list of relational aspects (3). The following categories of respondents were distinguished: respondents whose most important relationship was: a) a spouse who provided much support, b) a spouse who provided moderate support, c) a relationship other than a spouse who provided much support, d) a relationship other than a spouse who provided moderate support, and e) respondents who did not mention any relationship. Next, we determined the number of lonely people within each category. A self-rating scale, which assesses whether respondents label themselves as one of the (extremely) lonely people in society (4), was used as the loneliness measure. Table 1 shows the results of the analysis. Respondents whose most important relationship was a spouse were less likely to rate themselves as lonely than respondents whose most important relationship

was other than a spouse. The greatest number of lonely people were found in the category of respondents who did not mention any relationship.

Table 1. Relative frequency of labelling oneself as lonely by respondents with different kinds of relationships

Most important relationship	N		Lonely	
	(a)		(b)	(c)
Spouse	233		10.3	
Giving much support	191			7.3
Giving less support	42			23.8
Other type	301		47.8	
Giving much support	136			41.9
Giving less support	165			52.7
None	19	19	63.2	63.2
Total	553	553	32.5	32.5

- (a) Three cases have missing values
- (b) Chi-square = 92.7 with two degrees of freedom; significance = .0000
- (c) Chi-square = 100.9 with four degrees of freedom; significance = .0000

Furthermore, the data revealed that respondents who received much support were less likely to rate themselves as lonely than individuals receiving less support. This result was obtained for the respondents with a spouse as well as for the individuals with an important relationship other than a spouse. Thus the evidence shows that both the composition of the network (the type of the most important relationship) as well as the support provided by the most important relationship are important determinants of loneliness.

Given the importance of social support for experienced well-being, and given the finding that individuals are not always able to obtain the social support required, it appears meaningful to examine the manner in which individuals initiate new (supportive) relationships or improve existing ones. Specifically, the following questions should be addressed: a) Which types of relationships provide support? b) Which factors interfere in the process of initiating new (supportive) relationships, and which categories of individuals are particularly handicapped by these factors? We recently started a new research project which focusses on these issues. In the present paper we wish to deal with the questions in more depth (5).

WHICH TYPES OF RELATIONSHIP PROVIDE SUPPORT?

Two general common-sense notions, which are partially incorrect, appear to influence the research, policy development, and social services in this area.

The first notion is that support is provided by family members in particular (i.e. spouse and children). This statement requires further specification.

The supportive function of different types of relationships has not been investigated carefully. Some findings suggest that non-family relationships have an important and specific function, which complement the supportive function of family relationships. Stable and durable ties are important for the ability to cope with life events (Hirsch, 1981; Thoits, 1982). The existence of relationships outside the family is especially important with the loss of the spouse or when problems develop in the relationship with the spouse. Weak ties are useful to obtain information from outside the close-knit network (Granovetter, 1973). This information can help the individual to deal with problems (Walker, MacBride and Vachon, 1977), for example, by increasing the individual's independence from the close-knit network (McKinlay, 1973). Research conducted by K.B. Williams and K.D. Williams (1983) showed that people were more willing to approach others with whom they had weak ties than individuals with whom they had close ties. A possible explanation is that, assuming that asking for help implies failure, failure is less difficult to admit to superficial contacts.

The restriction of social support to emotional support, thereby neglecting instrumental and informational support, appears to account for the over-emphasis of the supportive function of family relationships. We suggest that a multi-dimensional approach to support can provide a broader understanding of the importance of family relationships and other types of relationships. For the moment we can conclude that family relationships are important for the individual. However, an over-emphasis of their supportive function can have serious implications. Individuals living in families may fail to develop relationships outside the household, and individuals living on their own may remain focussed exclusively upon a possible relationship with a spouse, thereby neglecting other (potentially supportive) relationships. A nuanced approach to the supportive role of different types of relationships is necessary.

The second notion is that support has only positive aspects. This notion also requires further specification.

Support can be a source of problems (6), for example when provided aid or information fail to match the needs of the individual. In addition, support may lead to negative consequences. Accepting help can produce feelings of personal unworthiness, for example because concessions have to be made to the provider of help (Caplan, 1976; Gourash, 1978) or because personal control and autonomy are lost (Hansson, Jones and Carpenter, in press; Hattinga Verschure, 1984; Schreiber and Glidewell, 1978) (7). Lewis (1973) demonstrated that the constant pressure of the

approval or disapproval of significant others (who are almost always supporters as well) restricts the individual's ability to develop and maintain relationships. People with specific problems appear to withdraw themselves from their social networks out of fear of negative reactions and stigmatization (Hansson et al., in press).

By not paying attention to the negative aspects of support, one may fail to understand why existing, potentially supportive relationships are not used by people conceivably in need of support.

In sum, on the basis of the available research findings and the existing insights, we conclude that in order to improve supportive networks it is necessary to direct one's attention to a) a broad range of relationships, b) several dimensions of support, and c) the negative aspects of support as well.

WHICH FACTORS OBSTRUCT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW (SUPPORTIVE) RELATIONSHIPS?

Several problems may arise in the process of developing new relationships. Rook and Peplau (1982) distinguished a number of social opportunities and personal problems that influence this process. Limiting social opportunities are, for instance, a shortness of time and money, and geographical or cultural isolation (see De Jong-Gierveld, 1984a). Limiting personal problems are, for instance, poor social skills, social anxiety and self-defeating perceptions (see Hansson et al., in press; Jones, 1982).

Our earlier research on coping with loneliness (Van Tilburg, 1982) showed that social opportunities as well as personal problems are important factors in the initiation of relationships. We noted an additional limiting factor. A number of lonely individuals appear to develop negative values concerning social relationships. They seem to downplay the importance of support, tending not to subscribe to values expressing the intention to have confidential relationships with others, to receive support when in trouble, or a shoulder to cry on.

This mechanism has not received much attention. Some studies (8), however, provide indications for the restrictive influence of personal values on the development of supportive networks. Research of Tolsdorf (1976) based on a sample of psychiatric and non-psychiatric patients, revealed that psychiatric patients in particular have negative values about relationships ("negative network orientation"). In general, they have also a smaller network of close relationships. McAdams and Losoff (1984) observed that children with more positive values (higher "friendship motivation") report more relationships, have more stable relationships, and are judged as happier by the teacher.

Personal values concerning relationships should not be examined in isolation from social values about relationships. This century has brought rapid and far-reaching changes in the social values about relationships, a development which is often referred to as "individualism" (Hofstee, 1980; Lukes, 1973; Romein, 1946/1971; Slater,

1970; Straver, Van der Heiden and Robert, 1980; Weeda, 1982). Individualization is seen as the process whereby people become more independent and, as a result, more willing to assume personal responsibility, to make personal choices, and to work toward self-actualisation. Although it should be emphasized that this process does not necessarily lead to the loss of relationships, isolation and loneliness (Kooy, 1977; Weeda, 1983), a number of authors, among them Romein (1946/1971) and Hofstee (1980), indicate that individualism may result in a decreased responsibility for the well-being of others and a loss of solidarity. The latter view conceives individualism as one of the sources of loneliness. Debates in The Netherlands on the scope and meaning of the modern welfare state tend to associate individualism with an egocentric and irresponsible concept of human nature (Kuiper, 1980), a lack of social morals (Zijderveld, 1979), and consumerism (Sectoroverlegorgaamaan Sociaal-Economisch Beleid van het Wetenschappelijk Instituut voor het CDA, 1984). The authors share the view that loyalty and individual responsibility are no longer valued in society: individuals tend to rely on the welfare state for help and care instead of providing for themselves (Schnabel, 1983; De Swaan, 1976/1982).

It is unclear to what extent the social process of individualization influences the development of specific negative or positive personal values concerning supportive relationships. This topic has not yet been empirically investigated. Personal values are not only a product of social values but also of personal experiences (Kluckhohn, 1967; Scheibe, 1970). Thus we expect to find a relation between personal values concerning relationships, personal evaluations of the attitudes of others in relationships, and specific life events.

Our hypothesis is that the values to which individuals subscribe are important determinants of whether or not they ask for support, for the manner in which they develop and maintain relationships, and finally, for their personal well-being.

In subscribing to values which downplay the importance of relationships, individuals can make an existing loneliness-situation acceptable and bearable (Greenwald, 1972). This process can have positive aspects. On the other hand, considering the importance of support for individual well-being, the positive aspects are likely to be outweighed by negative effects. Chances are that the individual will withdraw from most social contact, ending up in relative isolation. The vicious circle is complete (Jones, Freeman and Goswick, 1981). The "pessimistic and cynical attitudes toward other people appear to be stable features of incompetence and might result in the failure to perceive or believe that support is available" (Hansson et al., 1984, p.275). The loneliness-situation is perceived as hopeless; few attempts are made to change the situation because of low expectations for the success and for available support. There are a number of studies that confirm this process. Research by Eckenrode showed that "(b)eliefs regarding the efficacy of help-seeking/receiving ... had a direct effect on the mobilization of supports, and were related as well to the number of potential supporters" (1983, p.523). Solano, Batten and Parish argued that this "lack of faith in the good will of others may be an important motive in failure to

self-disclose" (1982, p.530). The results of a large longitudinal study conducted in the U.S.A. (Brown, 1978) revealed that people conceivably in need of assistance were often not looking for it.

The disruption of the vicious circle of negative experiences and negative expectations of social relationships is of great importance for individuals to be able to develop new relationships. In order to influence this process effectively, further insight is required into a) the manner in which individuals develop perceptions of their circumstances, b) the manner in which expectations and values concerning personal relationships are developed, and c) the manner in which personal capacities to change the situation are estimated. In addition, it is necessary to identify those groups of individuals who are more likely than others to adhere to negative personal values concerning personal relationships.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Research findings have revealed the positive influence of personal (supportive) relationships on individual well-being. The networks of many people provide inadequate support. Therefore, the improvement of supportive networks can be of great importance for well-being. Policy-makers and social service employees should realize, more than they have so far, that it is not easy to develop new relationships or to change existing ones (cf. Allan, 1983). The different types of support provided by the various relationships and the different values concerning relationships should also be taken into account. Research, policy development and social aid which follow the general outline described in this paper should contribute to the improvement of supportive networks.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study is made possible by a grant from the Fund for Research into the Social Services, which is supported by the National Council on Social Welfare, the Queen Juliana Foundation, and the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Cultural Affairs. We gratefully acknowledge the helpful comments of J. de Jong-Gierveld and P. Dykstra.

NOTES

1. Our definition follows the definition of House (1981), and Unger and Powell (1980), and contains aspects of the definitions of Cobb (1976, 1979), Kahn and Antonucci (1981), Caplan (1976), Tolsdorf (1976), Wilcox (1981), Gottlieb (1978), Hirsch (1980), Klein Beernink (1983) and Thoits (1982). Support is conceptualized as a subjective attribution which

entails objective aspects as well as subjective perceptions about the functions of relationships (cf. Gottlieb, in press; O'Conner and Brown, 1984).

2. The research design is described in De Jong-Gierveld (1984a).

3. In the analysis we distinguished between not lonely and (slightly, seriously and extremely) lonely people.

4. Twenty aspects were rated. With the Mokken Scale Analysis a scale was developed which takes 16 aspects into account. All these aspects concern emotional support. The homogeneity coefficient of Loevinger (H-coefficient) of the scale is .48. The scale is dichotomized around the mean, which is 11.5 (theoretical range 0 - 16).

5. Van der Vliert and De Boer (1984) have previously directed attention toward the first question, without elaborating on the topic.

6. We will disregard the fact that the family is an institution where love and violence often go hand in hand (Straus, 1980).

7. Research of Fischer and Nadler (1976) showed that especially low cost aid (aid from a high resource donor) tends to be a relatively self-threatening experience for the recipient, while high cost aid is a relatively self-supporting experience.

8. The studies of McAdams and Losoff (1984), Van Tilburg (1982) and Tolsdorf (1976) employed qualitative methods with small, non-representative samples.

REFERENCES

- Allan, G. (1983), Informal networks of care: issues raised by Barclay. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 13: 417-433.
- Berkman, L.F. and Syme, S.L. (1979), Social networks, host resistance and mortality: A nine-year follow-up study of Alameda County residents. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 109: 186-204.
- Blazer, D.G. (1982), Social support and mortality in an elderly community population. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 115: 684-694.
- Brown, B.B. (1978), Social and psychological correlates of help-seeking behavior among urban adults. *American Journal of community Psychology*, 6: 425-439.
- Caplan, G. (1976), The family as a support system. In: Caplan, G. and Killilea, M. (Eds.), *Support systems and mutual help: multidisciplinary explorations*. New York: Grune and Stratton, pp.19-36.
- Cassel, J. (1976), The contribution of the social environment to host resistance. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 104: 107-123.
- Cobb, S. (1976), Social support as a moderator of life stress. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 38: 300-314.
- Cobb, S. (1979), Social support and health through the life course. In: Riley, M.W. (Ed.), *Aging from birth to death: interdisciplinary perspectives*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, pp.93-106.
- Eckenrode, J. (1983), The mobilization of social supports: some individual constraints. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 11: 509-528.
- Fischer, J.D. and Nadler, A. (1976), Effects of donor resources on recipient self-esteem and selfhelp. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 12: 139-150.
- Gore, S. (1978), The effect of social support in moderating the health consequences of unemployment. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*,

19:157-165.

- Gottlieb, B.H. (1978), The development and application of a classification scheme of informal helping behaviours. *Canadian Journal of Science*, 10: 105-115.
- Gottlieb, B.H. (in press), Social support and the study of personal relationships. *Journal of Personal and Social Relationships*.
- Gourash, N. (1978), Help-seeking: a review of the literature. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 6: 413-425.
- Gove, W.R. (1972), The relationship between sex roles, marital status, and mental illness. *Social Forces*, 51: 34-44.
- Granovetter, M. (1973), The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78: 1360-1380.
- Greenwald, J.A. (1972), Self-induced loneliness. *Voices*, 1: 14-23.
- Hansson, R.O., Jones, W.H. and Carpenter, B.N. (1984), Relational competence and social support. In: Shaver, P. (Ed.), *Review of personality and social psychology*: Vol. 5. London: Sage, pp. 265-284.
- Hattinga Verschure, J.C.M. (1984), Zelfzorg en mantelzorg: nu en straks (Self-care and social support: now and presently). In: Boon, L. and Goudriaan, G. (Eds.), *Zorg in beweging: opvattingen over zorg*. Amsterdam: VU-uitgeverij/De Aemstelhorn.
- Hirsch, B.J. (1980), Natural support systems and coping with major life changes. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 8: 159-172.
- Hirsch, B.J. (1981), Coping and adaption in high risk populations: toward an integrative model. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 7: 164-172.
- Hofstee, E.W. (1980), Vrijheid, gelijkheid en eenzaamheid (Freedom, equality and loneliness). Afscheidsrede Landbouwhogeschool, Wageningen.
- House, J.S. (1981), *Work stress and social support*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.
- House, J., Robbins, C. and Metzner, H.L. (1982), The association of social relationships and activities with mortality: Prospective evidence from the Tecumseh Community Health Study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 116: 123-140.
- Jones, W.H. (1982), Loneliness and social behavior. In: Peplau, L.A. and Perlmans, D. (Eds.), *Loneliness: a sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy*. New York: Wiley-Interscience, pp. 238-252.
- Jones, W.H., Freemon, J.E. and Goswick, R.A. (1981), The persistence of loneliness: self and other determinants. *Journal of Personality*, 49: 27-48.
- Jong-Gierveld, J. de (1984a), Eenzaamheid: een meersporig onderzoek (Loneliness: a multimethod approach). Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus.
- Jong-Gierveld, J. de (1984b), Eenzaamheidsonderzoek Vrije Universiteit (Loneliness research Free University). (Machine-readable datafile). Amsterdam: Steinmetzarchief (Distributor).
- Kahn, R.L. and Antonucci, T.C. (1981), Convoys of social support: a life course approach. In: Kiesler, S.B., Morgan, J.N. and Oppenheimer, V.K. (Eds.), *Aging: Social change*. New York: Academic Press, pp. 383-405.
- Klein Beernink, M. (1983), *Netwerk van informele ondersteunende relaties: conceptualisering en aanzet tot operationalisering* (Networks of informal supportive relationships: conceptualization and basis for operationalization). Doktoraalskriptie, Vakgroep Methoden en Technieken, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam.
- Kluckhohn, C. (1967), Values and value-orientations in the theory of action: an exploration in definition and classification. In: Parsons, T. and Shils, E.A. (Eds.), *Toward a general theory of action* (6th ed.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Univ. Press, pp. 388-433.

- Knipscheer, C.P.M. (1980). Oude mensen en hun sociale omgeving: een studie van het primaire sociale netwerk (Elderly and their social environment: a study of the primary social network). Den Haag: Vuga.
- Kobrin, F. and Hendershot, G. (1977), Do family ties reduce mortality? Evidence from the U.S., 1966-68. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 39: 737-747.
- Kooy, G.A. (1977), Het modern-westers gezin: een inleidende gezinssociologische beschouwing (3e herz. druk) (The modern-western family: a family-sociological introduction). Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus.
- Kuiper, J.P. (1980), Mensopvatting en gezondheidszorg (Human nature and health care). Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Lewis, R.A. (1973), Social reaction and the formation of dyads: an interactionist approach to mate selection. *Sociometry*, 36: 409-418.
- Lin, N., Ensel, W.M., Simeone, R.S. and Kuo, W. (1979), Social support, stressful life events and illness: a model and a empirical test. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 10: 108-119.
- Lowenthal, M.F. and Haven, C. (1968), Interaction and adaption: intimacy as a critical variable. *American Sociological Review*, 33: 20-30.
- Lukes, S. (1973), Individualism. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- McAdams, D.P. and Losoff, M. (1984), Friendship motivation in fourth and sixth graders: a thematic analysis. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 1: 11-27.
- McKinlay, J.B. (1973), Social networks, lay consultation and helpseeking behavior. *Social Forces*, 51: 275-292.
- O'Connor, P. and Brown, G.W. (1984), Supportive relationships: fact or fancy? *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 1: 159-175.
- Ormel, H. (1980), Moeite met leven of een moeilijk leven: een vervolgonderzoek naar de invloed van psychosociale belasting op het welbevinden van driehonderd Nederlanders (Having difficulties with life or a life with difficulties: a follow-up study to the influence of psychosocial burdens on the well-being of three hundred Dutch people). Groningen: Konstapel.
- Reiche, H.M.J.K.I. (1982), Stress aan het werk: over de effecten van de persoonlijkheid en sociale ondersteuning op strains (Stress at work: about the effects of personality and social support on strains). Lisse: Swets and Zeitlinger.
- Romein, J. (1971), De vereenzaming van de mens: proeve ener theorie van geestelijke crisis (The lonely conditioner: a tentative theory about mental crisis). In: Romein, J., Historische lijnen en patronen: Een keuze uit de essays (pp. 215-244). Amsterdam: Querido. (Eerder gepubliceerd in *De Nieuwe Stem*, 1946, febr. Idem in J. Romein (1946). In opdracht van de tijd: Tien voordrachten over historische thema's (pp. 234-264). Amsterdam: Querido).
- Rook, K.S. and Peplau, L.A. (1982), Perspectives on helping the lonely. In: Peplau, L.A. and Perlman, D. (Eds.), *Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy*. New York: Wiley-Interscience, pp. 351-378.
- Scheibe, K.E. (1970), *Beliefs and values*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Schnabel, P. (1983), Nieuwe verhoudingen tussen burger en staat (New relations between citizen and state). In: Idenburg, Ph.A. (Ed.), *De nadagen van de verzorgingsstaat: Kansen en perspectieven voor morgen*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, pp. 25-67.

- Schreiber, S.T. and Glidewell, J.C. (1978), Social norms and helping in a community of limited liability. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 6: 441-453.
- Sectoroverlegorgaan Sociaal-Economisch Beleid van het Wetenschappelijk Instituut voor het CDA, onder voorzitterschap van drs. H.H.F. Wijffels (1984), Werkloosheid en de crisis in onze samenleving: de samenhang tussen economie, cultuur en politiek (Unemployment and the crisis in our society: the relation between economy, culture and politics). Den Haag: Wetenschappelijk Instituut van het CDA.
- Slater, P. (1970), *The pursuit of loneliness: American culture at the breaking point*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Solano, C.H., Batten, Ph.G. and Parish, E.H. (1982), Loneliness and patterns of self-disclosure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 43: 524-531.
- Straver, C.J., Van der Heiden, A.M. and Robert, W.C.J. (1980), Twee-relaties, anders dan het huwelijk? (Co-vivants, different from marriage?). Alphen aan den Rijn: Samson.
- Straus, M.A. (1980), Social stress and marital violence in a national sample of American families. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 347: 229-250.
- Swaan, A. de (1982), De mens is de mens een zorg: over de verstatelijking van verzorgingsarrangementen (People caring for other people: increasing state involvement). In: Swaan, A. de, *De mens is de mens een zorg: Opstellen 1971-1981*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, pp. 31-50. (Eerder gepubliceerd in: *De Gids*, 1976, 1/2).
- Thoits, P.A. (1982), Conceptual, methodological and theoretical problems in studying social support as a buffer against life stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 23: 145-159.
- Tilburg, T. van (1982), Werken aan verwerking van eenzaamheid (Working on coping with loneliness). *Doktoraalskriptie, Vakgroep Methoden en Technieken, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam*.
- Tolsdorf, C. (1976), Social networks, support and coping: an exploratory study. *Family Process*, 15: 407-417.
- Turner, R.J. (1981), Social support as a contingency in psychological well-being. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 22: 357-367.
- Unger, D. and Powell, D. (1980), Supporting families under stress: the role of social networks. *Family Relations*, 29: 566-574.
- Vliert, E. van der Boer, F. de (1984), Sociale steun als determinant van gezondheid: suggesties voor verder onderzoek (Social support as a determinant of health: suggestions for further research). *Gezondheid en Samenleving*, 5: 2-8.
- Walker, K.N., MacBride, A. and Vachon, M.H.S. (1977), Social support networks and the crisis of bereavement. *Social Science and Medicine*, 11: 35-41.
- Weeda, C.J. (1982), *Ideaalbeelden rond leefvormen: variatie in denken over huwelijk, gezin en andere leefvormen* (Ideals concerning life styles: variations in thoughts about marriage, family and other life styles). Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus.
- Weeda, C.J. (1983), *Dynamiek in leefvormen* (Dynamics in life styles). In: Idenburg, Ph.A. (Ed.), *De nadagen van de verzorgingsstaat: Kansen en perspectieven voor morgen*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, pp. 68-101.
- Wilcox, B.L. (1981), Social support, life stress and psychological adjust-

- ment: a test of the buffering hypothesis. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 9: 371-386.
- Williams, A.W., Ware, J.G. and Donald, C.A. (1981), A model of mental health, life events, and social supports applicable to general populations. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 22: 324-336.
- Williams, K.B. and Williams, K.D. (1983), Social inhibition and asking for help: the effects of number, strength, and immediacy of potential help givers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44: 67-77.
- Willige, G. van de and Ormel, H. (1979), Over dagelijkse problemen en gebeurtenissen (On daily problems and life events) (SCP-cahier no. 17). Rijswijk: Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau.
- Winnubst, J.A.M., Marcelissen, F.H.G. and Kleber, R.J. (1982), Effects of social support in the stressor-strain relationship: a Dutch sample. *Social Science and Medicine*, 16: 475-482.
- Woldringh, C. and Knapen, M.H.J.M. (1980), Vrij en alleen?: een explorerende studie in enkele grote steden in Nederland naar de situatie van ongehuwden en hun beleving daarvan (Free and single?: an explorative study in a few big cities in The Netherlands to the situation of unmarried people and their experiences). Nijmegen: Instituut voor Toegepaste Sociologie.
- Zijdeveld, A.C. (1979), Het ethos van de verzorgingsstaat: een cultuursociologische bijdrage (The ethos of the welfare state: a culture-sociological contribution). *Sociale Wetenschappen*, 179-203.